#### **IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS**

with Forest Service Officials, RAC Members, and County Officials

A Supplement To

Changing the Funding Structure:

An Analysis of the Secure Rural School and Community

Self-Determination Act of 2000 on National Forest Lands

**BRETT INGLES** 

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#### INTRODUCTION

This document is a companion piece to *Changing the Funding Structure: An Analysis of the Secure Rural School and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 on National Forest Lands.* The research conducted here (referred to as study Phase B in the aforementioned document) consisted of open-ended in-depth interviews with RAC members, Forest Service officials, and county officials. Two small, two medium, and two large RACs were visited¹ and RAC meetings were attended at four of the six locations. At each RAC location, one interview was conducted with either the Committee Coordinator or the Designated Federal Official and three interviews were conducted with RAC members, one from each category (for example, a grazing permittee would be interviewed from Category A, a member of a regional environmental group from Category B, and a school official from Category C). Information was also gathered about each RAC's internal processes through both attendance of RAC meetings and interviews.

Six open-ended interview sessions also took place with county officials from the county in which the corresponding RAC was located. In most cases the interview was conducted with the county commissioner or county administrator, but in some populous counties, it was more feasible to interview county staff members who were more intimately involved in RAC processes. If the RAC was a multi-county RAC, county officials from the county that had placed the most Title II money into the RAC were interviewed.

Finally, six open ended interview sessions were conducted with county officials in counties that had placed *at least* \$100,000 into Title III but had no money in Title II as of FY 2002.<sup>2</sup> Counties were chosen that were in close proximity to a RAC interview so that separate trips were not required. Attempts were made to try to visit both urban and rural counties.<sup>3</sup>

TABLE 1: Locations of In-Depth Interviews

|                              | •                     |                          |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| RAC                          | County<br>w/ Title II | County<br>w/ no Title II |
| 1. Tuolumne, CA              | Tuolumne, CA          | El Dorado, CA            |
| 2. Eastern Arizona Counties  | Greenlee, AZ          | Coconino, AZ             |
| 3. Crook County, WY          | Crook, WY             | Pennington, SD           |
| 4. Central Idaho             | Lemhi, ID             | Missoula, MT             |
| 5. Hood/Willamette, OR       | Lane, OR              | Yakima, WA               |
| 6. South Gifford Pinchot, WA | Skamania, WA          | Pierce, WA               |
|                              |                       |                          |

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For more information regarding RAC size, see APPENDIX C of the main report that accompanies this document: Changing the Funding Structure: An Analysis of the Secure Rural School and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 on National Forest Lands. RAC size was based upon the amount of Title II funding available to an individual RAC during the 2002 fiscal year

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See APPENDIX D from the main report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> One urban county turned down an interview request and was replaced with a less populous county.

Respondents were asked questions that were specific to their particular relationship or interest to Title I, II, and III funds. The first portion of this report examines whether different groups (excluding county officials without Title II funds) perceived a relationship change from the inception of their respective Resource Advisory Committees to the time of the interview. The report then explores questions specific to each group (Forest Service officials, RAC members, counties with funds in Title II, and counties without funds in Title II) and concludes by discussing questions that were asked to all groups.

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#### Stakeholders' Perceptions of "Improved Cooperative Relationships"

RAC members, Forest Service officials, and county officials (where the RAC is located) were asked if they perceived a relationship change among different groups as a result of the creation of their RAC. The term "cooperative relationships" was used (defined in Appendix A of this report ) to denote this change, except in the case of county officials, who were simply asked if the relationship between themselves and the Forest Service was better than before the RAC was created. County officials were not asked about their relationship with RAC members because most county officials do not work directly with the RAC.

# TABLE 2: Orientation of County Officials with Title II Funds Towards Forest Service Officials

5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=no opinion, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree<sup>4</sup>

| County (n=6)                                     | the RAC was created? 4.67   |
|--|---|
| other county officials<br>with funds in Title II | relationship with local<br>Forest Service officials<br>now than it did before |
| County Commissioners, County Managers or         | Do you feel that the county has a better                                      |

#### TABLE 3: Orientation of Forest Service Officials Towards RAC Members and County Officials

5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=no opinion, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

| Designated Federal Officials and Committee Coordinators of RACs | In your opinion, have cooperative relationships between the RAC and local Forest Service officials improved, stayed the same, or degraded since the inception of this RAC? | In your opinion, have cooperative relationships between the RAC and local county officials (where the RAC is located) improved, stayed the same, or degraded since the inception of this RAC? |
|---|--|---|
| Forest Service (n=6)  | 4.33   | 4.50  |

In general, all participants perceived a positive change in cooperative relationships between the different groups involved in RAC decision making processes. The most significant change appears to have taken place between county officials and Forest Service officials. All Forest Service and county officials interviewed agreed or strongly

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Numbers within these boxes represent the mean response on a Likert scale (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=no opinion, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree). The closer the mean is to "5", the, more favorable the response.

agreed that the relationship between the county and the Forest Service had improved as a result of the formation of the RAC. Both sides stressed how the Act requires these groups to work together and interact in ways that were not necessary or feasible prior to the enactment of the legislation. As one Forest Service official stated: "There truly has been a disconnect between us and the county. This legislation has given us a reason to interact. It has gotten people to talk to each other." A Forest Supervisor stressed the importance of relationship building:

It is another formal opportunity to get together. This whole process is about building relationships. Before, we would only meet with the county when there was a problem. Now, the meetings are about positive things. I see this as an opportunity, as a 'win-win'.

Similarly, one county official stated that the relationship between county employees and Forest Service employees had become "more intense" as a result of the legislation, noting that "as long as the checks were coming in, we were fine [but when the funding stopped coming in, things began to break down]" Because the county (or counties) and the Forest Service have to work together to dispose of Title II funds, there is greater reason and incentive for groups to communicate with each other.

Forest Service officials also reported an improved relationship between their agency and the RAC from the inception of the RAC to the present. All Forest Service employees interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that that relationship between the two groups had improved. One DFO noted that RAC members had gained a better understanding of the processes and procedures at play within the Forest Service. By understanding the bureaucratic and hierarchical structure of the agency, RAC members were better able to appreciate the constraints under which Forest Service personnel are placed. The same individual noted the importance of going on field trips to view RAC projects: "Getting out in the woods has really been important. RAC members get to see what Forest Service employees have to do, what they have to work with, et cetera." A Committee Coordinator felt the relationship had improved because "we have fifteen RAC members that have gained insight into how the Forest Service works."

TABLE 4: Orientation of RAC Members Towards Forest Service Officials, County Officials, & Other RAC Members

5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=no opinion, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

| Category A (labor, industry, and grazing) Category B (environmental, historical & arch. interests) Category C (government, schools, public-at-large) Category A (n=6) | relationships between the RAC and local Forest Service officials improved, stayed the same, or degraded since you joined this RAC? | relationships between<br>the RAC and local<br>county officials<br>improved, stayed the<br>same, or degraded<br>since you joined the<br>RAC? | relationships among RAC members improved, stayed the same, or degraded since you joined the RAC? |
|---|--|---|--|
|   | 3.83   |   |  |
|   |  | 4 ()()  | l 4.33   |
| - '   |  |   |  |
| - '   | 4.33   |   |  |

Though the majority of responses were positive, RAC members were less optimistic about relationships formed between themselves and the Forest Service. Twelve of the eighteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the relationship had improved while six respondents felt there had been no change (no respondents thought that the relationship had degraded). Reasons varied among those RAC members that cited a lack of change. The most common response was that the relationship between RAC members (as well as the community in general) and the Forest Service had always been good and that the RAC had not affected the relationship. One interviewee stated that the RAC had not been around long enough to have a significant impact. Another individual representing Group C responded: "During the two years that RAC members have worked together, the level of distrust and animosity towards the Forest Service has stayed constant." Though this response was somewhat tongue-in-cheek, it helps to illustrate the amount of work still remaining to improve the image of the agency in local communities. However, the same individual also later confirmed that she "had more insight into the constraints that the Forest Service is under." Many respondents focused on how this distrust and animosity is being broken down through interaction between the RAC and the Forest Service. One RAC member commented that the RAC "promote(s) dialogue between groups that probably wouldn't discuss things." Other members discussed the importance of being able to interface directly with their Forest Supervisor: "When you can get the Forest Supervisor to come to a meeting and members of the community can have questions answered about what is going on on the forest, it is a good thing." Though a number of comments focused on the importance of interface and dialogue between the two groups, none stated that they had a better understanding of Forest Service processes as suggested by Forest Service officials.

RAC members were least likely to experience a change in the relationship between the county and the RAC. Nine of the eighteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the relationship improved, eight felt that there had been no change and one felt that the relationship had degraded. This is not surprising because most RAC members have limited contact with county officials during the course of RAC business.<sup>5</sup> Many of the respondents said they simply didn't know enough about county officials to offer an opinion as to whether a change had taken place between the two groups (the individual that felt that the relationship had degraded cited a change in county leadership as the cause rather than interaction between the groups). Some felt that county officials had not done enough to form closer connections with the RAC: "We work closely with the Forest Service. I'd like to see us do more with the county," while others had close ties with county government and did not feel that the RAC exerted an impact that enhanced the relationship further. Those that did feel as if a positive change had taken place most commonly cited reasons similar to that of the previous question (between the RAC and Forest Service; improved dialogue, access to decision makers), however, others felt compelled to comment on the improved relationship between the Forest Service and the county because this relationship seemed most evident. One member who was familiar with members of county government responded: "I think there is a feeling of empowerment when it comes to the county. It gives them a bargaining position with the Forest Service and it gives them a chance to interface with different counties."

<sup>5</sup> Though some county officials are also RAC members, none of these individuals were interviewed as members

of the RAC (some were interviewed as county officials, however).

Lastly, RAC interviewees responded most favorably towards cooperative relationships formed amongst different committee members. Fourteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the relationship improved, three felt there had been no change, and one felt that the relationship had degraded. Many members reported that they experienced initial skepticism about the perceptions and intentions of other RAC members, particularly those that held views opposed to or in conflict with their own. However, over time, some RAC members claimed that they were better able to see others as individuals rather than ideologues:

Everybody has gotten to know each other a little bit better. There is more collaboration. The best example is [a member representing a regional environmental group]. He has always been regarded as a Green Liberal in the local newspaper. RAC members have gotten to know him better and understand his views.

This comment also suggests that getting to know each other better has been an important part of building and enhancing relationships. A member of another committee stated: "There is much barking back and forth at the meetings, but because we know each other, this is conducive to exchanging ideas." Relationship building is a process that takes time and many interviewees felt that the efforts taken to initially establish the RAC (and in some cases develop criteria for RAC decision making processes) allowed these relationships to take shape. All three of the respondents that felt that no change had taken place commented that they already knew most of the RAC members involved and therefore their perceptions had not changed. Not surprisingly, these same respondents were all members of small sized RACs. The individual that felt the relationships among RAC members had degraded had this to say:

The benefit [of the RAC] is that you are in contact with people that you wouldn't normally be. I'm not saying that the interaction isn't valuable—but we still have no reason to talk to each other outside of the RAC. Also, we only meet 2 or 3 times a year so that relationship hasn't really grown that much. I think the connections between agencies have been far more important.

In the mind of this RAC member, cooperative relationships could only be furthered through more frequent group interaction.

#### **Questions Specific to Forest Service Officials**

#### Can you please describe the process used by this RAC in order to approve projects?

All six Forest Service officials were asked to discuss the processes through which their RAC conducted business. Though each RAC operated differently, there appear to be similarities between RACs with similar amounts of funding. The following is a quick synopsis of the different project approval methodologies employed by the various RACs.

CROOK COUNTY, WY (Small): The RAC meets frequently (usually monthly) to entertain proposals. Proponents generally work through the Forest Service, though little screening of projects takes place. Projects are examined one at a time by the entire RAC and voted on. Voting on the projects usually takes place during the meeting, but some votes are tabled until the next meeting.

CENTRAL IDAHO (Small): This RAC also meets about every month. The process used by this RAC is almost identical to the Crook County RAC except that RAC members often initially require the proponent to come to the RAC with a "preview" presentation of their project. During the preview, the RAC members let the proponent know if they are interested in funding the project (though there is no guarantee that they will). If so, the proponent may come back to the RAC with a complete proposal.

**TUOLUMNE COUNTY, CA** (Medium): The RAC usually meets three times a year (June, July, and August). All project proposals from proponents are due by May for the entire year. At the June meeting, presentations are made to the RAC for Forest Service projects only. At the July meeting, presentations are made by the public. During the August meeting, the RAC members discuss and approve those projects that they like from both the Forest Service and the public.

EASTERN ARIZONA COUNTIES ORGANIZATION (Medium): The RAC meets three or four times a year. There is a due date for project requests before each meeting. At each meeting, the proponents make very short requests for funds (the RAC members have already read the requests before the meeting). RAC members then break up into their respective subgroups where each group ranks the projects they like the best. "There are usually a few that are high on everyone's list—the last few to be approved involve bartering, trading, whatever is necessary. Projects that are not approved are kept around and can be looked at at a later date."

**SOUTH GIFFORD PINCHOT, WA** (Large): The RAC usually meets two to three times a year. All project proposals are due around February for the entire year. All Forest Service projects are screened by Forest Service employees, but it is up to the RAC to screen projects from the public. Typically, one meeting is used for presentations and one meeting is used to approve projects (these are long meetings).

HOOD/WILLAMETTE, OR (Large): This multi-county RAC works by "county group" rather than by interest subgroup<sup>6</sup> and meets three or four times a year. There are so many project submissions (over 150 submissions per year, about 50 of which are approved) that it is more feasible for RAC members to focus on the areas they know well. Because of the large number of project proposals, very few proposals are made to the full RAC. Instead, most of the work is done outside the RAC meetings by RAC members and the Forest Service. County groups make their recommendations to the full RAC at the meetings and projects are approved. Because of the high volume of projects to be reviewed, limited time is available to spend on individual projects.

In general, the small RACs involved in this study tended to act more informally. RACs with larger amounts of money were compelled to develop more complex processes to deal with project approval. No process seemed to be particularly more effective than another. Rather, the RACs adopted methods that best fit their political and financial circumstances.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> County groups are groups of three or four RAC members representing a two or three county area within the RAC. When asked why the state of Oregon created multi-county RACs, the DFO responded: "This is because if the RAC is put together by forest, it is much easier for the Forest Service to deal with. Take Lane and Linn counties for example. Each county has more than one (National) Forest within its boundaries. Each forest would have to send representatives to each of these different counties if each county would have set up its own RAC. Our forest would have to deal with 4 or 5 different RACs at the same time instead of just one. We just don't have the personnel to do that. This way, we have one RAC and one forest." For a map of RACs in the state of Oregon, please see Appendix B of this report.

Of the six RACs included in the study, four were multi-county and two were single county. The benefit of multi-county RACs is that they allow funds in a certain area (or on a particular National Forest) to be pooled together. They also reduce some administrative burdens of the Forest Service and encourage cooperative relationships between county officials from neighboring counties. However, in some locations, members of multi-county RACs were required to spend significant effort to ensure that each county received its fair share of projects. This meant that advisory committee members acted as advocates not only for their interest but also for their county of residence. In some cases, the area of the RAC was extremely large which meant that members would have to travel long distances to attend meetings and would not be familiar with project proposal areas that were hundreds of miles from their homes.

TABLE 5: FACA Committees<sup>7</sup>

5=yes, very helpful, 4=yes, somewhat helpful, 3=neither helpful nor unhelpful, 2=no, it has been a hindrance, 1=no, it has been a significant hindrance

| Designated Federal Officials and<br>Committee Coordinators of RACs | In your opinion, has being part of a FACA committee been helpful for achieving the results for which RACs were intended (improved cooperative relationships, providing recommendations, etc.)? |
|--|--|
| Forest Service (n=6)   | 2.50   |

When asked about the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Forest Service officials' comments ran the gamut, calling the law everything from "helpful" to "bureaucratic crap." The majority of opinions towards FACA were noncommittal, however. Those that were marginally in favor of FACA noted that the law provides a good framework ("the 'thou shall nots' that exist within the law initially gave me an idea of the boundaries that I had to work within") while those that did not feel FACA was helpful felt that the law simply added more red tape to the RAC process. The prevailing feeling towards FACA, however, can be summed up in the words of a Committee Coordinator: "We have FACA and we can't get rid of it."

TABLE 6: Adequate Job Time and Resources for Forest Service Employees

| Size of RAC (in terms of dollars allocated for FY02) | Do you feel that your agency has provided you with enough job time and/or resources to effectively provide administrative and professional support to this RAC? |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | Yes No  |   |
| Small (less than \$200,000)                          | 1   | 1 |
| Medium (\$200,000-\$800,000)                         | 2   | 0 |
| Large (greater than \$800,000)                       | 1   | 1 |
| Total Forest Service (n=6)                           | 4   | 2 |

For more information about how FACA committees affect "public participation in environmental decision-making," see: Long, Rebecca and Thomas C. Beierle (1999). The Federal Advisory Committee Act in Public Participation and Environmental Policy. Resources for the Future. Discussion Paper 99-17.

Not surprisingly, some Forest Service personnel exercised caution when responding to the question posed in TABLE 6. Four officials felt they had received enough support and two felt as if they had not. All interviewees noted that working with the RAC was very time consuming. Those that felt that they had received enough support commented on how other employees either had been hired or pulled from different areas to assist in supporting the RAC. One DFO reported that a number of Forest Service employees were willing to *volunteer* their time in the evenings. Another discussed the importance of receiving overhead funds from the RAC to allocate the various staffing resources needed to effectively manage RAC business. Two Forest Service officials explained that added duties were simply part of their job and were to be expected. Those that didn't feel that they had received enough support pointed to the national, and to a lesser extent, the regional, levels of agency administration. One official responded in the following way (paraphrased):

When the legislation originally passed, there was a lot of wheel spinning by my agency in Washington DC. The process of getting (new RAC members) confirmed took forever. There are really only two people in DC managing all this and the process takes too long. Some of the people back there really aren't in touch with what is going on in western national forests. They didn't put enough horsepower into this process so we had to start making decisions on the ground. You can say that this legislation is flexible, but really we just haven't received much guidance and support, so we just started making decisions in the field and they have worked well for the most part.

In order to rectify the situation, the official called for more administrative and financial support from the Forest Service. The other official who responded negatively stated: "Forest Service wide, I do not feel that there is good recognition of the administrative details that go into a RAC."

Interestingly, Forest Service personnel's perceptions of administrative support appeared to have little to do with the money available to the RAC. It would stand to reason that National Forests which house larger RACs (who receive more money from RAC overhead and also benefit from RAC funding of Forest Service projects) would have more funding available to take care of administrative support issues. However, this suggests that the relationships between local, regional, and national functions of the agency may have more to do with how individuals chose to respond to the question.

#### **Questions Specific to RAC Members**

Interests represented: Attempts were made to interview RAC members representing as many different interests as possible. Of the eighteen RAC members contacted, ten of the fifteen different interests specified in the law were interviewed (no attempts were made to interview state, county, or locally elected officials because interviews with elected officials were already being carried out). Three groups; grazing permittees, local environmental group representatives, and school officials, were the interests that were most often interviewed because they were the most represented groups in each RAC.

TABLE 7: Interests Represented by RAC Members Interviewed

|  | Subgroup Rep             | resented by th             | e RAC Membe | ŗ     |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------|
| Interest Represented<br>by the RAC Member  | Category A<br>(Industry) | Category B (Environmental) |             | Total |
| Developed outdoor recreation, off highway vehicle user, or commercial recreation | 1                        | —                          | —           | 1     |
| Energy and mineral development   | 1                        | —                          | —           | 1     |
| Commercial Timber Industry   |                          |                            |             |       |
| Federal grazing permit holder or land use permit holder                          | 3                        | —                          | —           | 3     |
| Nationally recognized environmental organization                                 |                          | 1                          | —           | 1     |
| Regionally or locally recognized environmental organization                      | —                        | 3                          | —           | 3     |
| Archaeological and historical interests  | —                        | 1                          | —           | 1     |
| Nationally or regionally recognized wild horse or burro group                    | —                        | 1                          | —           | 1     |
| American Indian tribal representative  | —                        | —                          | 2           | 2     |
| School official or teacher   | —                        | —                          | 3           | 3     |
| Other (including replacement position)   | —                        | —                          | 1           | 1     |
| Total  | 6                        | 6                          | 6           | 18    |

All RAC members interviewed had been involved with the RAC from the time that it had begun and all but one had been full voting members during that time (one member had been an alternate for the entire life of the RAC).

**TABLE 8: RAC Composition and Voting Processes** 

5=yes, strongly agree, 4=yes, agree, 3=no opinion, 2=no, disagree, 1=no, strongly disagree

| Subgroup Represented<br>by the RAC Member | Do you feel that the composition of the fifteen member RAC as prescribed in PL 106-393 is a fair reflection of the different interests represented in your area? | Do you feel that the requirement in PL 106-393 that RAC approval of projects requires a majority in each of the three 5-member sub-groups has been helpful to the RAC's decision making processes when most of the members are present? |
|---|--|---|
| Category A (n=6)                          | 4.67   | 4.17  |
| Category B (n=6)                          | 4.17   | 3.50  |
| Category C (n=6)                          | 4.17   |   |
| Total RAC (n=18)                          | 4.33   | 3.56  |

Seventeen of the eighteen RAC members interviewed agreed or strongly agreed that the composition of their RAC fairly reflected the interests represented in their area. One member remained undecided on the issue. The majority of responses focused on the diversity of the group that had been created by the legislation. Members of Groups A and C tended to focus on how the RAC was representative of local economic issues: "We have a good matrix of different interests in our economy here...or at least what our economy used to be." Many members of Group B wished that they could have more representation on the RAC, but acknowledged that the representation they received was fair, if not over representative, of the community in which they lived. One member of Group B (representing a regional environmental group), who had initially struggled with the makeup of his RAC, responded:

I realize now why the law is set up the way it is. If you had real extreme members in all of these categories, the RAC would collapse. As long as the constituencies are good, this process works—it would be different if all of the projects were one sided.

A number of comments focused on the difficulty associated with finding all of the interests included in the legislation. While none of the RACs examined in this study had attempted to create a committee consisting of all 15 interests, it is clear that attempts were made to include as many interests as possible. One RAC member responded to this issue in the following way: "I do remember thinking about how we were going to fill some of these positions. In some cases, we had to *generate* a name to fit our needs. This was not an easy, ready made group of people." There is some evidence that a small percentage of the interests represented in this study were "generated." For example, a retired Forest Supervisor was placed on a RAC to represent "archaeological and historical interests" because he served as the trustee of a historical organization (however, it took him a few minutes to remember which interest he represented and why he had been placed on the RAC to represent that interest). In another example, a woman who had attempted to join the RAC under an environmental interest (Group B) was accepted to the RAC as an "American Indian tribal representative" (Group C) because she worked part time for a local tribe (and though she was not Native American, it was apparently more difficult to find the latter interest in that area).

Opinions were far more varied when RAC members were asked whether the majority requirement in each subgroup was valuable to RAC decision making processes. Ten members agreed or strongly agreed, three members had no opinion, and five disagreed or strongly disagreed with this requirement in the law. Members who responded positively focused on how this voting structure empowers each group and encourages more debate and dialogue than a vote by simple majority. Surprisingly, members of Group A showed the greatest support for this rule rather than Group B (it would seem more logical that those representing minority environmental interests would perceive the greatest benefit for this rule). Though there is no clear explanation for this, it is hypothesized that members of Group A liked the rule because it helped to validate the legitimacy of the projects approved by the RAC (i.e. This project received approval from a diverse group and does not simply benefit me or my interests).

Those that did not support the majority requirement often found the process unnecessary, redundant, and/or tedious. Some members responded that the fate of only a handful of projects had ever come down to tallying up the votes of the different groups (the rest were unanimous or only had one or two dissenting votes).

One committee member strongly opposed the RAC voting process because he felt that it was very inefficient: "Under this system, the meetings are so long that sometimes you say that you don't care anymore and just agree to a project so that you can go home." Individuals' feelings towards this part of the law seemed to be most strongly tied to the way in which the RAC conducted business. Members of those RACs that placed a strong emphasis on subgroup activity had a higher number of respondents that were favorable to the majority requirement.

Finally, many respondents noted the difficulties associated with absences at RAC meetings. An extreme example of how this problem can be played out is explained by a member:

In one meeting, we only had three members in one of the groups. One person was against a project that everyone else supported. That person was having a bad day with issues not even related to the RAC. Because of the structure, that one person was able to kill the whole project. It also means that we have to make this one person's issue a priority to get anything done.

When only three members of one group are present at a meeting, one dissenting vote from within that group can stop an entire project. If less than three members are present, the RAC does not have a quorum and cannot conduct business. At one meeting attended, the Forest Service set up a conference call with an absent RAC member in order to obtain a long distance quorum.

**TABLE 9: Forest Supervisor Veto** 

| Name of RAC              | Has your RAC ever<br>approved a project<br>which was later vetoed<br>by a Forest Supervisor? |            |
|--------------------------|--|------------|
|                          | Yes  | No         |
| Central Idaho            | 0  | 3          |
| Crook County             | 0  | 3          |
| Eastern Arizona Counties |  |            |
| Hood & Willamette        | 0  | 3          |
| South Gifford Pinchot    | 2  | 1          |
| Tuolumne County          | 0  | 3          |
| Total RAC (n=18)         | 2 (11.1%)  | 16 (88.9%) |

When asked whether a Forest Supervisor had ever vetoed a project that had been approved by the RAC, only two RAC members representing the South Gifford Pinchot RAC said that a veto had taken place. The veto discussed by the South Gifford Pinchot members (and confirmed by the Forest Supervisor), did not turn out to be a significant event, however. As explained by a RAC member: "The sponsor was accepted and then the sponsor disappeared. A new, unacceptable sponsor tried to fill in." In a separate interview, another South Gifford Pinchot member added "The Forest Sup. did us a favor by vetoing this proposal." Many respondents stated that a veto by the Forest Supervisor had not been necessary because the RAC and Forest Service have placed a significant emphasis on communication, pre-empting any of this action. However, at least one RAC member was concerned that the Forest Service had too much power over the RAC, stating that the Forest Supervisor should have to come back to the RAC to explain why he or she wants to veto a recommendation.

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#### **Questions Specific to County Officials with Title II Funds**

Six open-ended interviews were conducted with county officials where each RAC was located. If the RAC was multi-county, then the interview was conducted with the county who supplied each RAC with the most funding. County commissioners (or equivalent) were interviewed in all but one county, where the county's administrative analyst was interviewed. Throughout the remainder of this report, the terms "county" and "county official" will be used interchangeably to denote the orientation of an individual interviewee with a county. It is important to recognize that the individual(s) interviewed may not reflect the diverse opinions shared by all county officials, elected or otherwise.

TABLE 10: County Allocations of Title II and Title III Funds (Fiscal Years 2001 & 2002)

| Name of County<br>(Name of RAC) | FY01 Title II Funds<br>(% of full payment) | FY02 Title II Funds<br>(% of full payment) | FY01 Title III Funds<br>(% of full payment) | FY02 Title III Funds<br>(% of full payment) |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Crook, WY (Crook)               | \$66,627 (13.5%)                           | \$67,160 (13.5%)                           | \$7,403 (1.5%)                              | \$7,462 (1.5%)                              |
| Lemhi<br>(Central Idaho)        | 93,212 (16%)                               | 93,958 (16%)                               | 23,303 (4%)                                 | 23,489 (4%)                                 |
| Tuolumne, CA<br>(Tuolumne)      | 279,071 (11.25%)                           | 281,304 (11.25%)                           | 93,024 (3.75%)                              | 93,768 (3.75%)                              |
| Greenlee<br>(E. Ariz. Counties) | 92,993 (15%)                               | 93,737 (15%)                               | 0 (0%)                                      | 0 (0%)                                      |
| Skamania, WA<br>(SG Pinchot)    | 877,561 (8.25%)                            | 997,165 (9.3%)                             | 718,005 (6.75%)                             | 611,166 (5.7%)                              |
| Lane, OR<br>(Hood/Willamette).  | 3,200,148 (10%)                            | 3,161,234 (9.8%)                           | 3,200,148 (10%)                             | . 3,290,264 (10.2%)                         |

*Note:* These numbers reflect the amount of funding that each county allocated during a given year. Lemhi, Greenlee, Skamania, and Lane counties are part of multi-county RACs, so these numbers do not reflect the amount of funding a particular RAC has to work with.

#### Allocation of Funds to Title II and Title III

Officials were asked to discuss some of the factors that persuaded their county to place funds into Title II. Interviewees in four counties stated that members of the board had supported the Act long before it ever became law and had always intended on placing funds in Title II. One county stated that the board had mixed opinions before the Act was passed but were supportive of forming a RAC once the legislation was enacted. Finally, one county official was under the impression that his county was required to put funding into Title II.

When asked whether other counties' decisions to place funds into Title II affected their county's decision to do the same (within the same state), all but one respondent stated that they would have placed funds into Title II regardless of what other counties did. However, some county officials that formed multi-county RACs noted that they paid more attention to the fiscal decisions of other counties because they would directly affect the newly formed RAC. One commissioner acknowledged that his county's membership in the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition was a significant factor in convincing his county to place more funds in Title II.

<sup>8</sup> Except for Greenlee County, AZ, which supplied the Eastern Arizona Counties RAC with the second highest amount of funding.

County officials were asked to describe the decision making process used to allocate specific funds to Title II and Title III (For example, why did Tuolumne County decide to place 11.25% of its funds into Title II, as seen in TABLE 10? Why did Skamania County place 8.25% into Title II in FY01 and 9.3% in FY02?). In general, few specific reasons were given for splitting funds between Title II and Title III. However, officials in Lane County noted that funds were split equally between Title II and Title III (10% to each) for the 2001 fiscal year as a compromise between the various commissioners. Only Greenlee County decided against placing any funds into Title III, stating that the county was so rural that it did not have the structure in place to do anything significant with the money. In most cases, specific allocations for a particular year were used to fund specific Title III projects. For example, Lane County increased the amount of Title III funding from 10% in FY01 to 10.2% in FY02 in order to fund a forest work camp. Two county officials stated that they determined how much money would be needed for Title III funds for a given year and then placed the remainder of the balance into Title II. One commissioner described the Title II/Title III split as "arbitrary" while others were unsure of why the county decided to make specific allocations.

Under the Act, counties may allocate between 15% and 20% of total funds for Title II and Title III combined. As shown in TABLE 10, four counties placed 15% of their funds in Title II/Title III (the minimum) while the other two counties placed 20% (the maximum). When asked why their county decided to place 15% of funds into Title II/Title III one county responded that it wanted to place more funds in Title II/Title III but could not because "15% benefited us more for budgetary purposes. Increasing this amount would have cut back our current expenditures because the state views these funds (Title II and Title III) as funds they don't have to give us (instead of funds that are in addition to what the county already receives from the state)". Two counties stated that they wanted to keep as much money available for schools as possible and the other two counties did not cite specific reasons for their decision. Of the two counties that did place 20% of funds in Title II/Title III one cited the desire to return as much money as possible back to the county's natural resource based economy and the other did not cite a specific reason.

In some counties that accepted stable payments under PL 106-393, Federal Payment(s) In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) decreased when a county allocated some of its stable payment for uses under Title III of the Act. To your knowledge, was the impact to PILT payments one of the factors that led this county to place more funds in Title II, since Title II funds do not count against the PILT payment?

When asked about PILT payments, three counties noted that they were subject to the minimum method calculation and therefore their PILT payment was not affected by opting in to the Act. A Greenlee County official stated that her county's PILT payment may have been affected had the county placed some of its funds into Title III (rather than putting all 15% in Title II). Only Lane and Tuolumne counties experienced a decline in PILT as a result of Title I and Title III funds. In the case of Lane County, however, the decrease in PILT payments was negligible: "Our PILT payment was lowered a little bit, maybe \$250,000 to \$290,000 overall, but that isn't much compared to the 30 million or so we receive (from the full Title I, II, and III payment). It wasn't significant here and isn't significant in this state." Tuolumne County confirmed a \$379,000 decrease in PILT payments as a result of accepting the stable payment. Though the Tuolumne County official recognized that PILT was a factor used in determining whether to place funds into Title II, he noted that "the spirit of the law was a more overriding factor."

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To your knowledge, were any county officials opposed to the formation of this RAC? To your knowledge, were any Forest Service officials opposed to the formation of this RAC?

County officials were asked whether any county or Forest Service officials were opposed to the formation of the RAC (two separate questions). No interviewees stated any opposition from county officials towards the formation of a RAC, though some did mention that they had colleagues that opposed the original legislation. County officials noted no opposition from the Forest Service of any kind.

#### **Questions Specific to County Officials with No Title II Funds**

Commissioners (or equivalent), county managers, and county personnel were interviewed from six counties which had *at least* \$100,000 in Title III funding during Fiscal Year 2002 but had placed no funds in Title II. These interviews also focused on understanding the decision making processes used by counties towards placing funds in Title III as opposed to Title II.

TABLE 11: County Allocations of Title III Funds (Fiscal Years 2001 & 2002)

| ,              |   | ,   |
|----------------|---|---|
| Name of County | FY01 Title III Funds<br>(% of full payment) | FY02 Title III Funds<br>(% of full payment) |
| Missoula, MT   | \$105,620 (15%)                             | \$106,465 (15%)                             |
| Pierce, WA     | 157,684 (20%)                               | 158,945 (20%)                               |
| Pennington, SD | 202,747 (15%)                               | 204,369 (15%)                               |
| Yakima, WA     | 510,263 (15%)                               | 514,345 (15%)                               |
| El Dorado, CA  | 586,607 (15%)                               | 591,342 (15%)                               |
| Coconino, AZ   | 634,914 (16.6%)                             | 701,680 (18.8%)                             |
|                |   |   |

*Note*: Pierce County is a member of the South Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie RAC and Yakima County is a member of the Wenatchee/Okanogan RAC, though neither contributes Title II funds.

#### Allocation of Funds into Title III

When asked why their particular county decided to place funds into Title III instead of Title II, all county officials said in some way or another that the needs of their community were better met through the avenues presented by Title III funding. In most cases, this meant particular attention to and emphasis on fire related issues. As explained by one county commissioner:

We had numerous discussions about whether to put money into Title II or III. We met with the Forest Service about this. When we were convinced that Title III could go towards the fire issues that were really important to the county, we went with it.

In every county, the primary uses for Title III funds were fire suppression and prevention, emergency services, or a combination of the two (though funding amounts for emergency services were usually higher). Two counties used Title III funds to maintain a FIRESAFE council which, in the estimation of those officials, accomplished many of the same collaborative goals of a RAC. One county leveraged Title III money with state funds in order to purchase twelve new fire trucks for the area, presumably for use in the urban interface. All interviewees noted the importance

of Title III funding towards the supplementation of search and rescue budgets (the same is true of those counties that had funds in both Title II and Title III).

There were many other reasons cited by county officials. Two respondents stated that they did not want to place funding into Title II because they viewed Title II as money that would benefit the Forest Service rather than the county. Some discussed the amount of time and work involved in forming a RAC, particularly if the county did not have a lot of funding to put into it. One county was concerned that Title II funding would be used to empower environmental organizations: "Biodiversity groups and environmental groups like the Sierra Club have turned this place into a fire trap by not allowing us to manage our forests effectively. We do not want to give them money through Title II." Two counties, Yakima and Coconino, stated that severe budget shortages did not make placing funds into Title II possible. Yakima County officials seemed particularly supportive of the idea of a RAC but affirmed that the county was "just trying to survive," noting that without Title III funds Yakima County would have no way to address environmental issues. Lastly, one county did not like the idea of having to put an elected official on the RAC instead of an appointed official.

As shown in TABLE 11, four counties decided to place 15% of funds into Title III and two counties decided to place more than 15%. Of the counties that placed 15% into Title III, three wanted to put as much funding as possible into roads and schools (two of those three were more concerned about road funds because school funds would not have been as greatly impacted) and one county was not aware that a county could place more than 15% into Title II/Title III. Of the counties that allocated more than 15%, one felt that there was already enough money going to schools and the other stated that the decision provided a financial benefit to the county.

While Title III funds can be used for fewer purposes than Title II funds, counties are able to obtain more discretion over how these funds are spent (as compared with Title II). Is increased discretion over Title III funds one of the factors that have convinced this county to place all funds that cannot be placed in Title I into Title III?

All but one county felt that maintaining discretion over funds was the most important factor towards placing funds into Title III (the other county felt this factor was important but not most important). One commissioner affirmed: "Elected officials have to have final discretion over funds like this because they will be ultimately responsible if the funds are misappropriated." Though not expressly stated by any interviewees, it was clear that many county officials felt uncomfortable with the idea of a citizen committee maintaining control over funds that would otherwise be controlled by the county.

In some counties that accepted stable payments under PL 106-393, Federal Payment(s) In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) decreased when a county allocated some of its stable payment for uses under Title III of the Act. To your knowledge, has your county experienced a decrease in PILT payments as a result of accepting the stable payment?

When asked about PILT payments, three respondents confirmed that placing funds into Title III had little or no effect on their PILT payment and two counties were not sure if PILT had been affected or not. However, Coconino County experienced a \$471,000 decrease in its PILT payment as a result of the county's Title I and Title III allocations. This came as a surprise to the county and has been cause for considerable concern.

In your opinion, do you think that the county will move funds from Title III to Title II in the foreseeable future?

Three counties did not think that funds would be moved into Title II because Title III was already in place and working well. Yakima County noted that it would like to move funds into Title II but did not think that this action would take place due to extreme budget shortfalls. Two counties were uncertain as to whether funds would be moved. One county official acknowledged that it came very close to moving funds into Title II during the previous year but ultimately decided against it (and did not want to publicly disclose the reasons why). Not surprisingly, Coconino County officials confirmed that they are taking a closer look at Title II funding, especially after being informed that allocating funds to Title II would not count against the county's PILT payment.

#### **Questions Asked to All Groups**

All groups interviewed were asked to discuss their feelings towards the Act. Specifically, they were asked if the law should be renewed and what they liked and didn't like about it.

TABLE 12: Renewal of PL 106-393

5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=no opinion, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

| Group                     | Do you think that PL 106-<br>393 should be renewed<br>after Fiscal Year 2006? |
|---------------------------|---|
| Category A (n=6)          | 4.67  |
| Category B (n=6)          | 4.33  |
| Category C (n=6)          | 4.67  |
| Total RAC (n=18)          | 4.56  |
| Forest Service (n=6)      | 4.83  |
| County w/ Title II (n=6)  | 4.83  |
| County w/o Title II (n=6) | 4.83  |
| All (n=36)                | 4.69  |

That is a no brainer. We now have a 17.5 million dollar budget and 4.5 million comes from Federal forest funds. We would have to let a lot of people go... This is critical to (our county) and we have to insure that this money continues to come here.

Comment of a county official with funds in Title II.

Support for renewal of the Act was almost unanimous among interviewees regardless of which constituency they represented. Of the 36 individuals interviewed, all but one agreed or strongly agreed that the law should be renewed (one RAC member had no opinion). The reason most widely given for continuation of the law was simple: money. In every jurisdiction where interviews were conducted, counties received more money from opting in to the Act than they did under the 25% law (in most cases, the total increase was over 50%). County officials with and without Title II funds were very supportive of the law's renewal and tended to focus on what could happen if the Act is not renewed: "It would be a catastrophe if the county were to lose this revenue."

Many declared that a return to the 25% payment is not a viable financial option for rural areas: "If we were to return to the 25% payment in this area, we would be in serious trouble. This forest has a new purpose now (it is no longer used for logging) and the old funding mechanism no longer works." Forest Service officials focused on the added financial benefits to both their agency and the county and also were quick to point out that the law "reconnects communities with the Forest Service." RAC members were most likely to focus on the relationship building aspects of the law.

TABLE 13: Most Successful Aspects/Requirements of PL 106-393

| What aspects of PL 106-393 do you think have been the most successful? | RAC | Forest<br>Service | County<br>with<br>Title II | without |    |
|--|-----|-------------------|----------------------------|---------|----|
| Title II funds, cooperative relationships                              | 9   | 6                 | 5                          | 1       | 21 |
| Title I funds  |     |                   |                            |         |    |
| Stable payments to counties  | 1   | 3                 | 1                          | 2       | 7  |
| Improving resources (environmental and/or economic)                    | 1   | 3                 | 1                          | 1       | 6  |
| Flexibility of the law   | 2   | 1                 | 0                          | 2       | 5  |
| Title III funds  | 0   | 0                 | 0                          | 3       | 3  |
| Increased community involvement  | 1   | 1                 | 0                          | 1       | 3  |

*Note:* All issues stated by respondents are included. Some respondents noted no issues while others mentioned several.

When asked about which portions of the Act were working the best, respondents were most likely to comment on how the law encourages relationship building, discourse on public policy issues, or dialogue between groups. Many interviewees focused on the RACs themselves (or the structure of the RACs) as the most beneficial and meaningful part of the law. A number of interviewees commented that Title I funding for roads and schools was by far the most successful piece of the legislation because increased revenue has had the most notable impact in communities.

TABLE 14: Aspects of PL 106-393 That need to be Changed/Addressed

| What aspects of PL 106-393 do you think need to be changed?     | RAC | Forest<br>Service | County<br>with<br>Title II | County<br>without<br>Title II |   |
|---|-----|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Alternate RAC members should have a more expanded role          | 2   | 3                 | 1                          | 0                             | 6 |
| Change/Expedite the RAC appointment process                     | 2   | 1                 | 2                          | 0                             | 5 |
| Increase flexibility for allowable Title II/Title III projects  | 0   | 0                 | 2                          | 3                             | 5 |
| Decrease power of the Forest Service on the RAC                 | 2   | 0                 | 1                          | 0                             | 3 |
| Give regional, local Forest Service officials more power        | 1   | 2                 | 0                          | 0                             | 3 |
| Change the quorum/voting requirement for RACs                   | 1   | 2                 | 0                          | 0                             | 3 |
| Change or eliminate PILT reduction for Title I and/or Title III | 0   | 0                 | 2                          | 1                             | 3 |
| Allow projects to be funded on other Federal lands, state lands | 2   | 0                 | 0                          | 0                             | 2 |

*Note:* All issues stated by at least two or more respondents are included. Some respondents noted no issues while others mentioned several.

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Responses were far more varied when interviewees were asked about problematic portions of the law (several responses are not listed because they were stated by only one person). Issues with RAC processes were most commonly cited. Some interviewees argued that alternate members should have a more expanded role in the RAC: "Alternates are a problem. It is hard to keep alternates engaged. There is no reason for them to be engaged. If replacements had a role, this would make a difference." Some suggested that alternates should be utilized when a quorum is not present in a group. Also on the issue of quorums (the requirement that a RAC meeting cannot be held unless three out of five RAC members are present in each group), a few RAC members felt that this requirement should be changed. However, the way in which the quorums should be changed was up for debate. One respondent wanted to increase the required quorum to four while another wanted to do away with it entirely. The RAC appointment process was also mentioned as being overly time consuming. Some suggested that it would make more sense for a regional or local Forest Service officer to appoint RAC members rather than the Secretary of Agriculture.

Other changes to the law suggested by interviewees included constructing the RAC differently, not subjecting the committee to FACA, removing the merchantable material and 50% road/watershed clauses<sup>9</sup>, and combining BLM and Forest Service RACs. Several other comments were made about the way in which portions of the law were being implemented, but not about the law itself.

#### **Conclusions**

As a whole, all groups interviewed related positive experiences from the Act. Forest Service officials, RAC members, and county officials with funds in Title II all felt, to varying degrees, that cooperative relationships had improved among the different groups (because of the Act in general and the creation of Resource Advisory Committees in particular). Respondents most often stressed how RACs require these groups to work together—something that may not have been taking place prior to the law's passage. Some county officials without funds in Title II also emphasized a heightened working relationship with the Forest Service and the community, though this relationship does not appear to be as intense as the one created through Title II funds.

There does not appear to be a strong link between the amount of funding available to an advisory committee and cooperative relationships. Regardless of funding, the law requires the same amount of interaction between different groups. Not surprisingly, those county and Forest Service officials with the most money at stake (large RACs) were the most vehement supporters of the Act. However, many interviewees involved with small and medium sized RACs felt that the relationship building that had been accomplished was equal to or more important than the work that had been done on the ground.

Each advisory committee employed different tactics to entertain project proposals and make recommendations. In general, those committees with more funding showed a

<sup>9</sup> The Merchantable Material Contracting Pilot Program requires a certain percentage of RAC projects to involve the sale of merchantable material while the 50% clause requires that 50% of all Title II funds from each RAC must be used for road maintenance and/or watershed restoration (§ 204 (e) (3) and § 204 (f) of the Act respectively).

greater level of complexity than those with less funding. However, this does not mean that one process was inherently better than another. It simply suggests that RACs have been given the latitude to create a process that best fits their circumstances. Multicounty RACs benefited from pooled resources but many spent extra time trying to make sure that each county received it fair share of project funds.

Most counties that placed funds into Title II mentioned that the decision to do so was pre-ordained, requiring little discussion. Additionally, counties cited various specific reasons for splitting Title II and Title III funding as well as placing more than 15% of funds into Title III. The protection of PILT payments was a minor factor in the decision making processes of a few of these counties. Counties that did not place funds in Title II all recognized the importance of maintaining control over those funds. The prevailing feeling of these counties was that the options available under Title III better fit the needs of the county and that the creation of an advisory committee was unnecessary. One county was considering moving funding into Title II to reduce the impact on PILT payments and another would have liked to place funds into Title II but felt that budget shortfalls precluded it from doing so.

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## APPENDIX A: Operational Definitions

Small, medium, and large RACs. Defined in terms of the amount of money that each advisory committee received for FY 2002.

Small RAC: Less than \$200,000

Medium RAC: Between \$200,000 and \$800,000

Large RAC: Greater than \$800,000

**Forest Service Official**. Refers to the Committee Coordinator and Designated Federal Official of each RAC. If another Forest Service employee is deemed to have intimate knowledge of the RAC, they may also be considered a Forest Service Official and their job title will be noted.

RAC categories. As defined by PL 106-393, Section 205 (d) (2), the three RAC groups (community interests) are defined as such:

#### Group A:

- 1a: Organized labor
- 1b: Developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle user, or commercial recreation
- 1c: Energy and mineral development
- 1d: Commercial timber industry
- 1e: Federal grazing permit holder or land use permit holder within the RAC area

#### Group B:

- 2a: Nationally recognized environmental organization
- 2b: Regionally or locally recognized environmental organization
- 2c: Dispersed recreation activities
- 2d: Archaeological and historical interests
- 2e: Nationally or regionally recognized wild horse or burro group

#### Group C:

- 3a: State-elected office holder or their designee
- 3b: County or local elected office holder
- 3c: American Indian tribal representative from a tribe within or adjacent to RAC areas
- 3d: School official or teacher
- 3e: Citizen representing the affected public at large

RAC Member. A member of one of the above categories who has been appointed to a RAC by the Secretary of Interior as per Section 205 (c) of PL 106-393.

County Official. Elected or appointed official of a county who has intimate knowledge of decisions to place money into Title III and or Title II. This is usually a County Commissioner, but may be another individual, especially in urban counties.

**Urban Counties**. Counties with a total population of greater than 500,000 persons according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

**Semi-Urban Counties**. Counties with a total population of greater than 100,000 but less than 500,000 persons according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

**Rural Counties**. Counties with a total population of less than 100,000 persons according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

Cooperative Relationships. Subjective term that refers to the feelings expressed by RAC members and Forest Service officials towards the RAC, local Forest Service Officials, and County Officials. According to Section 2 (b) of PL 103-393, the third purpose of the act is "to improve cooperative relationships among the people that use and care for Federal lands and the agencies that manage these lands." Federal lands are owned by the American citizenry and, ultimately, it is the general public that "use(s) and care(s) for Federal lands." Because RAC members are chosen to represent "community interests," they can be considered to be representative of the public at large. For the purposes of the RACs examined in this study, the Forest Service is the only federal land management agency through which RAC members are directly involved.

The term "cooperative relationships" will be functionally defined as the more commonly used "collaborative relationships." Therefore, questions about "improved cooperative relationships" refer to the RAC members' ability to work better among themselves as well an improved ability for the RAC (as a whole) to solve issues with Forest Service and County Officials as compared to what individual citizens could accomplish without the presence of a RAC. Similarly, questions about "improved cooperative relationships" in relation to the Forest Service refer to Forest Service Officials' improved ability to solve issues with members of the community (specifically RAC members) and County Officials through the Resource Advisory Committee than what individual Forest Service Officials could accomplish without the presence of a RAC.

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APPENDIX B: RACs on Forest Service Lands in Oregon

